

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A nutritional infant formula comprising a protein source, a carbohydrate source and a lipid source, the nutritional formula having a pH, in its liquid state, in the range of 3.5 to 6, the formula comprising lactic acid and at least 70% by weight of the lactic acid is present as the enantiomer of L-(+)-lactic acid, the formula is directly acidified.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The nutritional formula according to Claim 1, wherein the nutritional formula is in a powder form.

Claim 3 (canceled).

Claim 4 (canceled).

Claim 5 (currently amended): The nutritional formula according to Claim [[4]] 1 comprising a protein source selected from the group consisting of whole or skimmed milk powder, casein, whey protein, soy protein, rice protein, carob seed protein, germ flour protein, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The nutritional formula according to Claim 5, wherein the casein and whey protein is intact or not hydrolysed.

Claim 7 (currently amended): A method of preparing a nutritional infant formula comprising the steps of

hydrating at least one of a protein source and a carbohydrate source,

directly acidifying the hydrated carbohydrate source and/or the hydrated protein source by adding diluted L-(+) lactic acid until a pH of about 3.5 – 6 is obtained and at least 70% of the lactic acid is present as L-(+) lactic acid.

Claim 8 (original): The method according to Claim 7, comprising the further step of adding a lipid source.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 8, wherein the step of adding a lipid source is performed before adding L-(+) lactic acid.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A method of preparing acidified nutritional infant formulas comprising the step of directly acidifying the nutritional formula by using a lactic acid chosen from the group consisting of isolated and purified L-(+)-lactic acid.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A method of preventing growth of pathogens in infant nutritional formulas comprising the step of directly acidifying the nutritional formula by using a lactic acid chosen from the group consisting of isolated and purified L-(+)-lactic acid.

Claim 12 (canceled).

Claim 13 (previously presented): The nutritional formula according to claim 1, wherein the nutritional formula comprises 0.5-3.5% by weight L-(+)- lactic acid, based on the dry weight of the nutritional formula.